



**Annual General Meeting
World Trade & Convention Centre
Summit Suite
April 30, 2015
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

1. Call to Order

Francis Fares, Chair of the Board called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. saying that the meeting offers a fiscal and operational review for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2014.

MOTION: THAT the minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting are approved. Moved by Mark Fraser; seconded by Lori Barton. Motion approved.

2. President's Report - As presented at AGM

"Thanks to all of you for joining us here today."

I would like to welcome all of you – along with our Directors, Committee Members and Chairs. And welcome those who have been active in building this organization – past and present – who are with us today.

The Chamber's Annual General Meeting is a mandatory function of the Chamber's Bylaws, where certain processes must be completed and traditions upheld. This includes introducing our new Chair of the Board and Vice Chair, which Francis Fares will do shortly.

First, I would like to give a brief update on what we have been working on since we last met in April 2014. The AGM is the perfect time to pause and give reflection on what your Halifax Chamber of Commerce has accomplished over the past 12 months. It also gives us time to examine our opportunities and challenges.

Your Chamber of Commerce is primarily small businesses, with 83% of the member companies having fewer than 25 employees. Many of our events and advocacy work is focused on their needs and challenges.

This year was strong financially, as you can see on the slide. Our revenue is steady and expenses are well managed. Our revenue sources, as you can see, are primarily from our members, whether through annual dues, ticket sales to our events, or training.

Our five-year Strategic Plan was designed to help guide the Board of Directors, task forces and staff in our efforts around advocacy, event and communication themes – it's hard to believe we're already two years into our plan!

Our over-arching goal states: 'The Halifax Chamber of Commerce is committed to enhancing the prosperity of its members and to realizing Halifax's potential to be among the top 3 highest growth economies in Canada by 2018.'

This ambitious goal was designed through outreach to our members.

We collected feedback through online surveys, forums and events, emails, letters and calls and the views of your representatives on Committees and Boards. And we listened.

The three key areas that we have been focusing on since 2013, and will continue to focus on until 2018 will be:

- Create a Positive Business Environment
- Grow and Nurture the Skilled Workforce
- Drive Member Prosperity and Value

Level Chan, of Stewart McKelvey, has taken the lead on the Membership Committee, which is focused on driving member prosperity and value. Earlier this year we held a series of focus groups including large member companies, Not-for-Profits, Small business members, Cancelled Members and Never been a member. The recommendations coming out of these consultations will guide the work for the Membership Committee and staff moving forward.

We have just brought on a new Member Services Coordinator, who brings considerable service experience to our organization and will be focused on ensuring member satisfaction remains high. We want all members – which represent 90,000 individuals! – to really understand the value of the Chamber to our city and province, the value to them as businesses, to have them take advantage of networking events, insurance programs, advocacy work, and training programs, to name a few.

In 2013, two task forces were created, focusing on specific areas of the Strategic Plan: Reducing the Tax Burden, Prompting Entrepreneurship and Increase Immigration. Darren Nantes, President, Nantes Capital Inc. is the Chair for the **Create a Positive Business Environment** Task Force. Darren and his task force members have taken strides in reducing the tax burden, an issue that members have shown concern on time and time again.

Some of the highlights in the past 12 months include:

1. Helped shape the Chamber's response to the Provincial and Municipal budgets
2. Participated in Laurel Broten's tax review on how to build a better tax system in Nova Scotia.
3. Participated in Halifax Transit's "Moving Forward Together Plan"

Mark Fraser, Executive Vice President, T4G leads the **Grow and Nurture the Skilled Workforce** Task Force. To date, Mark and his team have been collaborating on behalf of us all with government, business owners and post-secondary institutions -- to bridge the gap between international students and our provincial retention rates of graduates and immigrants.

Over the past 12 months they have been working hard in the following areas:

1. Participated in the province's consultations on the future of the university sector.
2. Promoted the importance of immigration to Chamber members and worked with government to inform people about the new Express Entry system.
3. Provided detailed feedback to the Minister's Panel on Education and worked to support the Minister's Education Plan.

Tonight's Spring Dinner is a good example of our outreach on this goal.

We've launched our "Driving Diversity" program, aiming to connect over twenty business leaders with local immigrants through a partnership with the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia. We hope the "Driving Diversity" program helps build engagement, and starts a conversation.

In the fall, we sent out our Annual Fall Satisfaction Survey and received double the responses as we had in recent years. Hmmm...."that could be good or bad", I thought.

We had improvement in almost every area, with some key areas of noted increases.

1. 92% of respondents would recommend joining the Halifax Chamber.
2. The value of Chamber membership in relation to cost increased from 67.3% satisfaction, to 78%. Over 10% increase.
3. Members involved with the Major Projects happening in our region reached over 27%!

We were delighted by these results but know there is always more we can be doing for our members. In your packages today, you can view the highlights of our results for that survey.

Our staff, with the support of our dedicated volunteers, are continually seeking guidance and insight from our members to create better networking opportunities, relevant training programs, and news that will

help you build your business.

Our All Ships Rise initiative has realized continued growth over the past year. The upcoming All Ships Rise trade show will be our biggest yet, bringing business to business in the quest to negotiate contracts and subcontracts for major projects in Nova Scotia.

Our training programs will more than doubled our types of training offered over the coming months. These training programs will be offered for free or at an affordable cost to Chamber members. This will allow increased accessibility to quality and standardized training for all our members – no matter what the size of that member business.

These training opportunities will focus on Project Management, Professional Sales, Leadership Business Communication, Strategy Development, and Quality Management and ISO certification. These are areas that are all important to growth in Nova Scotia Businesses.

Every one of us contributes to growth and development. In our business and in our community. Look to All Ships Rise to see where the Chamber can help.

Halifax is at an opportune time in history, and we want to assist our members to take advantage of the every single opportunity that is out there. And perhaps create a few of their own!

Before I sign off, I would like to call your attention to the YES! buttons you have in your kits today. The “YES! Campaign was created around the Sunday shopping debate, over a decade ago. We’ve made some modifications to the pin, including the top 5 languages that are spoken in our region today, to be more inclusive.

We think it’s time to bring back this message, to everyone that resides in Halifax. To mobilize the strength in numbers as we use our collective voices to say:

- Yes to growth
- Yes to diversity
- Yes to innovation

I’d ask you to wear your pin tonight and when someone asks you about it, let them know that you support growth and entrepreneurship, that you support retaining our graduates, that you support our immigrant population, and that you speak positively of the major projects in our region.

Creating a positive business environment starts with YES! and YOUR positive attitude. All it takes is one positive conversation with a nay-sayer to help them to shift their train of thought. Let’s start spreading our positive stories tonight!

On an operational front, we have some exciting news to share - this fall, the Halifax Chamber of Commerce will be moving to a new location, at 32 Akerley Boulevard in Dartmouth, a Cominar property. While we’ve had over 10 great years in our current location, our team is excited to move because it will offer improved

space to serve our membership. We will be much better positioned to provide the high quality space for

the increased level of training, business – to – business meetings and events.

Given that we host over 200 members through our office in most months, we are delighted that our new space will be a better fit for our business model and continued growth.

The new “Chamber of Commerce Building” offers ample free parking for visitors – especially helpful for those who might be spending extended periods with us for training, natural light, and accessibility. These are all key features we heard from you, our members, during our Fall Satisfaction Survey in late 2014.

With our current lease due to expire, we gathered input on what attributes we needed in our next location. Filters were used to guide the process - affordability, accessibility, strategic alignment, visibility, reflective of our members and non-competitive with our members’ businesses.

We then engaged CBRE Limited, via a request for proposals, to bring in professional expertise to work with us on this important process.

On our behalf, CBRE Limited received 41 expressions of interest for possible locations! Using the filters I mentioned earlier, this list shortlisted to 14, including our current location, to consider and visit. Locations were viewed on both sides of the harbour, including both downtown cores. Five of the best-suited properties were invited to submit proposals to host the Chamber offices, and the final choice was made.

We anticipate moving towards the end of this year. You will be hearing more from us as our plans become firmer.

As some of you may know, I have advised our Board about my plan to retire at the end of 2016. Work on a succession plan has been underway for the past number of months. Our Board has an approved CEO succession plan and process.

It might seem early to be putting this plan in motion. But the timing really speaks to you when you start breaking your year into quarters!

Recruiting a CEO is probably the biggest role of a Board of Directors and I am pleased we are taking it so seriously with the advance work being done at such a high level of professionalism.

Our next step is to select a search firm, through an RFP process which will be sent out later this Spring. This is to keep you updated, but not yet a “good-bye”.

I am around for awhile yet!

That has been a bit of a “Chef’s Sampler” of an example of things that happen at the Chamber over the past year and the direction we are heading.

There are many things happening on many fronts – all aligned with our Strategic Plan. I cannot do it justice in the few minutes we have. But I hope I have given you a sense of the great year we have had, and some of the opportunities in the year ahead.

Looking forward to another outstanding year in 2015-16.

3. Outgoing Chair Remarks (Francis Fares)

"Thank you for your efforts this year. Thank you for support of me as your Chair. Together we have made a difference.

It has been an honor to serve as your Chair and to help Halifax be the city we know it can be. Thank you."

4. Financial Report

Carol MacMillan, Chair of the Audit and Risk Board Committee provided a brief financial report. She drew attention to the audited Financial Statements for 2014 that were included in the package of materials distributed at the annual general meeting.

- On Page 1, The Independent Auditors' Report, we are pleased to report that the audit is an unqualified opinion.
- On Page 2, The Statement of Financial Position you will see the Chamber improved by \$5,978 to \$891,980.
- On Page 4, The Statement of Operations, there is a more detailed breakdown of the drivers of the surplus of revenues over expenditures amounting to \$5,978. Revenue line items include memberships, events and other revenue such as insurance and certificates of origin.
- On Page 5, The Statement of Cash Flows, the Chamber's annual cash flow from operations was \$27,907. This is down from 2013, when we were showing \$179,666. This is due primarily to increased expenditures for a management position that was vacant for most of 2013.

MOTION: THAT the 2014 Audited Financial Statements with amendments as stated at the March 24, 2015 meeting of the Board of Directors for the Halifax Chamber of Commerce be approved as presented. Moved by Carol MacMillan; seconded by Rob Batherson. Motion Approved.

Carol also brought forward a motion to approve the Chamber's Annual Auditors.

MOTION: THAT Collins Burrow be appointed as the Auditors for the Halifax Chamber of Commerce for the period May 2015 – May 2016. Moved by Carol MacMillan; seconded by Stanley Julien. Motion Approved.

5. Thank You to Outgoing Board Members

At this point Francis Fares, Chair, recognized the contribution of those Chamber members who are completing their terms as Board Members.

Departing from the Board are:

- Andrew Boswell, President, Nova Communications, served on the Board of Directors of the Chamber since 2005. From 2013 – 2014, Andrew was an influential and strong Chair of the Board.
- Ruth Rappini, Principal, Business Management Consulting, served on the Board of Directors since 2011. Ruth was active on our Audit & Risk Committee. Ruth sent her regrets to us today.
- Stephanie Coldwell, Principal, Coldwell & Associates, served on the Board of Directors since 2008. Stephanie was active in chairing our Advocacy & Stakeholder Relations Committee/now known as Membership Committee. Stephanie sent her regrets to us today.

Francis then recognized the Chairs of the Chamber's two Task Forces that align directly with the 5 year Strategic Plan. Darren Nantes, President and CEO of Nantes Group Limited is leading the **Create a Positive Business Environment** task force and Mark Fraser, Executive Vice President at T4G is leading the task force under **Growing the Skilled Workforce**.

Francis thanked them both for taking a leadership role and helping the Chamber lead Nova Scotia's economy in a bright direction.

Francis also thanked all of the Volunteers that came out today – noting they are vital to our success.

6. Ratification of the Actions of the Board in 2014-2015

MOTION: THAT we approve the actions of the Board of Directors for 2014-2015. Moved by Cynthia Dorrington; seconded by Michele Williams. Motion Approved.

7. Announcement of 2015-2016 Board of Directors

Francis drew everyone's attention to the Nominating Committee Report 2015-2016. The report lists the names of the Chamber members who will sit on the Board of Directors in the coming year. This list was developed according to the process outlined in the Chamber bylaws. The Chamber always has a strong group of interested volunteers from a wide variety of business backgrounds on its Board.

Francis noted new to the Board for the coming year are: Stanley Julien, Regional Vice President Commercial Banking – Atlantic Provinces, BMO Bank of Montreal and Sreejata Chatterjee, Co-Founder and Chief Product Officer, LeadSift.

He also noted Carol MacMillan, CFO, The Shaw Group is our new Vice Chair of the Board and Rob Batherson, Senior Vice President & Managing Partner, Public Affairs, Colour is our new Chair of the Board.

8. Bylaw Changes

Francis advised those attending that the bylaw amendments are primarily housekeeping items. The bylaw amendment in section 5.06, page 10 of the bylaws, a copy is included in the AGM package. The only change is that the Chamber established a Board Membership Committee to focus on the third pillar of our Strategic Plan. This change was approved by the Board at its March meeting and as per our bylaws must be approved at the AGM.

MOTION: THAT the amendments to the Halifax Chamber of Commerce bylaws as presented be approved. Moved by Captain Topshee; seconded by Level Chan. Motion Approved.

9. Introduction of Vice Chair of the Board (Carol MacMillan)

Francis introduced Carol MacMillan.

Carol MacMillan is the Chief Financial Officer for the Shaw Group Limited, a position she has held since 2008. She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of New Brunswick and has a Chartered Accountant Designation.

She is the recipient of the Edith G. McLeod Memorial Award and a Progress Women of Excellence Award. Carol has been involved in a number of community activities including: the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nova Scotia, the New Brunswick Institute of Chartered Accountants, the Financial Executives Institute, the YMCA of Greater Halifax, the David Foster Gala, IWK Telethon, and the 2014 Women for Mental Health Choir and Relay for Life.

She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Halifax Chamber of Commerce; Chair of Audit and Risk Committee and 2015 Vice Chair of the Board, the King's College Investment Committee, and the Phoenix Youth Programs Charitable.

10. Introduction of Chair of the Board (Rob Batherson)

Francis provided an introduction for incoming Chair Rob Batherson.

As Senior Vice President and co-owner, Robert Batherson leads the public affairs practice for Colour, a leading communications and marketing agency with offices in Halifax, Moncton, St. John's and Toronto.

Since joining Colour more than ten years ago, Rob has provided strategic counsel on communications planning, media relations, issues management, crisis communications, and corporate reputation and government relations to clients in the energy, transportation, health care, financial services, construction, food service, tourism, entertainment and small business sectors.

Before his move into private practice, Rob spent most of the previous decade working in the Office of the Leader of the Opposition in Nova Scotia, on Parliament Hill in Ottawa and in the Office of the Premier Nova Scotia, first as Press Secretary, concluding as Communications Director.

Rob joined the Halifax Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors in 2009, serving as Chair of the Human Resources and Governance Committee from 2012 through 2014. A dedicated community volunteer, Rob also serves as President of Neptune Theatre Foundation, a board member the Halifax Stanfield International Airport Authority and a member of the national board of the Communications and Public Relations Foundation.

Past community activities include the Board of Governors of Mount Saint Vincent University, the United Way of Halifax's campaign management team, Halifax Regional Municipality's Regional Plan Advisory Committee, Halifax-Dartmouth Canada Day Committee and the Board of Directors of Canadian Public Relations Society-Nova Scotia.

Born in Sydney, Cape Breton, Rob holds a Bachelor of Public Relations degree (with distinction and co-operative education designation) from Mount Saint Vincent University where he also earned a Certificate of Proficiency in French with distinction. He resides in Halifax's west end with his wife Cathy MacIsaac and son Sam.

11. Reading and Signing of the Oath of Office

Francis welcomed Mayor Savage to the meeting and invited him to the podium to administer the oaths. Before administer the oaths Mayor Savage thanked the Chamber Board and members of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce for our work to promote and expand business in Halifax. The Mayor noted how positive it is to have a Chamber that believes in being a champion of growing our economy in Halifax, one that actively works to keep our youth here and is committed to working with new immigrants. He spoke on the changes to the municipal tax structure since 2012 and recognized the Chamber for our willingness to work together during municipal budget processes. He concluded by thanking Francis Fares for his work as Chair and wished Rob Batherson well in the upcoming year.

Mayor Savage then proceeded by administering the oaths.

First to Incoming Vice Chair, Carol MacMillan.

I, Carol MacMillan, swear that I will faithfully and truly perform my duty as Vice Chair of the Board of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, and that I will, in all matters connected with the discharge of that duty, do all things, and only such things, as I truly and conscientiously believe to be adapted to promote the objects for which the Chamber was constituted, according to the true intent and meaning of the same. So help me God.

Then to Incoming Chair, Rob Batherson

I, Robert Batherson, swear that I will faithfully and truly perform my duty as Chair of the Board of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, and that I will, in all matters connected with the discharge of that duty, do all things, and only such things, as I truly and conscientiously believe to be adapted to promote the objects for which the Chamber was constituted, according to the true intent and meaning of the same. So help me God.

12. Incoming Chair's Remarks – Rob Batherson

Rob thanked Francis for his outstanding contribution as Chair. Francis was active championing the Strategic Goals of the Chamber and a tireless Champion to Member issues.

13. New Business

Francis asked for any new business arising from the floor. There being none the agenda moved forward.

14. Questions from the Floor

Francis asked for questions from the floor. There being none the agenda moved forward.

15. Adjournment

MOTION: THAT the 2014 Annual General Meeting of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce is adjourned. Moved by Margaret Chapman; seconded by Mark Sidebottom. Motion Approved.